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THE MANILA TRADE SCHOOL

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Industrial education in the Philippines is probably the most important and difficult problem that the Bureau of Education is solving. The varying local conditions, the diversity of tribes and consequent difference in dialects and methods of living require individual attention. As iron work of any description does not enter into the native house, the principal parts of which are palm leaves and bamboo, very few tools are required by the builder. As a matter of fact, his whole equipment may consist of a big strong butcher knife called a "bolo." The obvious advantages of such simplicity cause one to wonder if any change is really to benefit the native; but, right or wrong, the change is taking place, and it becomes the duty of the white man to see to it that the native receives proper training for life under the new conditions.

From the viewpoint of the American the scarcity of native skilled labor and the necessity for making the Filipino self-supporting at an early date required that industrial education be given immediate attention in the Philippine Islands. Therefore, by act of the Philippine Commission \$10,000 was appropriated for the establishment of a trade school in the City of Manila. This money was available for use when the first large contingent of American teachers arrived in Manila, in August, 1901.

As no school equipment could be immediately obtained, the teachers assigned to the trade school were formed into a committee to investigate the various industries of the City of Manila. Agricultural work was not investigated, but was left to the consideration of the agricultural school. Naturally, the first places visited were the large factories. Chief among these were the cigar and cigarette making establishments. Marine work, both construction and repair, was also performed in large shops. In all these places it was observed that the work requiring greatest skill was performed by Chinamen, and, according to the statement of an English superin-

tendent, fully fifty per cent additional men were kept on the rolls in those branches in which the natives worked because of the Filipino's disinclination to work a full week. It was also observed that a great deal of carpentry work was being carried on, but with few Filipinos doing any of the skilled labor. Plumbing of whatever description was unknown in the homes of most of the inhabitants of the city. There were few good blacksmiths and no native shoemakers. Wood carving, jewelry making and tailoring seemed to show that the Filipino could perform very creditable work if the work pleased him; and to please him it must not be too laborious. It should be stated, however, that, upon becoming better acquainted with the native, these early impressions were slightly modified.

The investigations of the committee showed the advisability of introducing trade courses in plumbing, carpentry and drawing. All of these courses were to be supplemented by instruction in colloquial English and practical arithmetic and were to be as complete as possible. The object was to prepare the pupil for his life-work and not for a higher institution of learning.

Buildings which had been erected by the Spaniards for use in their exposition of 1895 were secured as the first home of the school. These houses were single-story affairs, of wood and plaster, with tile floors and the customary shell windows of the islands. They were located about a mile from the heart of the city. Considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining tools and supplies, as practically all material had to be purchased in the United States. This caused a delay, but a few sets of tools were obtained in the city and a beginning was made. Plans were arranged for teaching shop classes of twenty-four pupils each, and eventually complete bench equipments for this number were obtained and installed.

The school was well advertised and any Filipino desirous of learning a trade was admitted without regard to age or previous training. For many months the majority of those who entered left after a few days' attendance. The mastery of the English language and the attainment of qualifications enabling them to secure clerical positions seemed to be the principal objective of the applicants. Other government schools served their purpose better in this respect and really accomplished wonderful results, for, during the few years of American occupation, English has become more generally known than the language of the Spaniard, notwithstanding the three hundred years of the latter's control.

More than half of those who first entered had been rejected by other schools. Some of them were curiosity seekers. At the close of the first term barely a dozen of the original pupils were still in school, and a part of this number were those taking special courses in drawing. It was especially disheartening when it became apparent that school progress in the islands was to be rated by the number on the rolls. Schools for teaching common academic branches were flourishing, and many were established, since such schools needed only small and inexpensive equipments. Normal schools were encouraged because Filipino teachers with proper training were greatly needed. Both of these conditions kept the trade school from attaining the important position it deserved.

At an early date the government had assumed charge of the telegraph lines, but skilled operators could not be secured for all stations. To remedy this a special course in telegraphy was offered by the school. This proved successful from the start, as the class of work appealed to the people and the salaries offered those who qualified were very satisfactory. An American operator gave practical instruction in sending and receiving messages, care of instruments and batteries and simple wiring. Four hours each day, including Saturdays, were devoted to this part of the course, and for two hours a day, five days in the week, instruction was given in English and arithmetic. After a few months' instruction, pupils were graduated in this work to become useful operators for the government. When Secretary Taft visited the islands, in 1905, he called at the school and sent a "message" from one building to another, stating, "I believe that the future prosperity of the Philippine Islands depends, in great part, upon the primary and trade schools."

Just previous to this visit two small kerosene engines had been installed, one in the machine shop and the other in the carpenter shop. Plumbing had attracted so few pupils that it had been temporarily abandoned and machine shop work put in its place. Work in the shops immediately became more popular, as six lathes, a circular saw, a band saw and a planer were added to the equipment of the carpenter shop, and three lathes, an upright drill and a shaper were placed in the machine shop. Twelve portable forges had also been erected and a course in general blacksmithing had been added to the list of trades taught. The work of this shop was very suc-

cessful, although many of the poorer pupils were compelled to work in their bare feet. The school now had about one hundred and fifty pupils, some engaged in the work of the second year, and a few who had been in the school for three years. These pupils represented all classes of society and nearly every province of the islands. Two Chinese youths were earnest and faithful pupils.

As originally planned, all courses required that three hours each day be spent in the shops, with one additional hour for drawing and two hours for academic work. Each successive year the period for shop work was to be lengthened and other periods shortened until, during the fourth and last year, all the time was to be spent in the shops. The unfortunate propensity of the natives for transferring to other schools prevented this plan from being carried out, yet each year the growth of the school was evident. A new system established by the director of education, restricting admission to all schools to certain periods during the year, and a signed transfer from another school to entitle the pupil to entrance, prevented this shifting of pupils from taking place.

There were now thirteen teachers in the school. The teacher of blacksmithing was a former quartermaster's employee who knew his trade thoroughly, but who had never acted as a teacher before. The teacher of machine work was also a practical man, while seven of the remainder of the teaching force were trained teachers from the United States. Of the latter three were women. Four of the teachers were Filipinos who had received most of their training in this trade school. One conducted a class in freehand drawing, another taught wood carving, the third was a very efficient assistant to the teacher of carpentry, while the fourth assisted in mechanical and architectural drawing. The latter was formerly a pupil in the old Spanish trade school. This school occupied a fine large building just outside the city walls in an excellent location. From what could be learned from old records and from the statements of former pupils, this was an industrial school which would rank very favorably with other schools of a similar character in other countries, both in equipment and in the value of courses presented. By comparison, the school of the Americans must have suffered in the minds of the natives, although there was a marked difference in the methods of conducting the schools which was in favor of the Americans. Chief among these was freedom from any cost whatsoever

to the pupil, as opposed to the material and tuition charges of the Spanish. The Americans had fewer restrictions on entering their school. At an early date the Spanish trade school building had been turned over to the Bureau of Printing and therefore was not available for the purposes for which the Spaniards had used it.

In 1905 the Manila Trade School, or Philippine School of Arts and Trades, was reorganized. The class of telegraphy was transferred to the Commercial High School and changes and improvements made whereby it was possible to admit three hundred pupils. Fully ninety per cent of the total number who entered were taking industrial courses, that is, they were studying certain trades which they intended to follow after leaving school. Not only were they instructed in the work of their chosen trade, but they were given as broad a general education as was compatible with the limited time at their disposal and with their individual needs. It was not intended nor expected that the school would graduate journeymen, for it is doubtful if school instruction can ever fully take the place of practical experience, one really supplementing the other. In addition to the work already outlined, an earnest effort was made to inculcate ideas of patriotism and respect for good government. Thus the ideal of the school was to prepare its pupils to become intelligent and progressive workmen, taking a proper pride in their work, with a working knowledge of the rights and duties of good citizenship.

Pupils in those courses which included carpentry, machine shop work, furniture making, wood carving, boat building, plumbing, blacksmithing, mechanical and architectural drawing were required to pass suitable examinations for admission. These were very much the same as are required for admission to a technical high school in the United States. There were no pupils under fourteen years of age and no provision had ever been made for girls in the school. To further assist in the training of pupils of this class, efforts were made to secure practical work for all worthy pupils in the different government shops during the summer vacations. Other courses which were to be added were sign painting and basket work, the latter to include the making of rattan furniture.

For pupils who were qualified, courses in engineering were offered and a class in civil engineering started. Pupils in this class were well grounded in what might be called high school subjects. Theoretical training was given at the school during the morning

hours and practical work in the afternoons, through the co-operation of the Bureau of Public Lands, where one of the engineers was assigned to look after the interests of the pupils. After the first year a small salary was paid these pupils by the Land Bureau, with a gradual increase at stated periods until the pupil had qualified as an engineer, when he was to receive such salary as his merits warranted. This course has not been in operation long enough to produce definite results.

It was the intention and desire to commence a class in marine engineering as soon as a sufficient number of pupils qualified. Such a course ought to be extremely beneficial, as so many engineers are required for the boats of the harbor and for the ever-increasing fleet of inter-island boats. Possibly this course could have been started if the instruction could have been given in the Spanish language but as matters stood, no such instructors were available, and no pupils applied who could understand English.

A third set of pupils, few in number, came to school to obtain knowledge of some special trade without spending any time on allied subjects. These pupils spent the whole school day in the shops and were admitted without reference to the customary requirements; in fact, few of this class knew a single word of English. They usually remained for a few months only, leaving as soon as they acquired knowledge of some particular part of the work or because of lack of funds. Pupils of this class were usually full-grown men. One man, a former janitor in the school, succeeded in making himself a set of carpenter's tools, and is now earning his living as a woodworker, although he had no previous training or experience. Other former members of the trade school can be found in the shops of Manila, some occupying higher places than they probably deserve, simply because of the lack of skilled Filipino workmen. It was hoped that eventually some of the graduates would establish shops of their own.

Attempts, made at different times, to establish evening classes met with but indifferent response, and it cannot be said that much real good was accomplished in this way.

The buildings, once before referred to, were of inferior construction and generally unfitted for trade school work. Their location near the Philippine Normal School, in a portion of the city difficult of access, was a further drawback. Notwithstanding all

this, the growth of the school demanded additional rooms. Some old sheds were utilized. The pupils of the school boarded in the sides with lumber which they had prepared. The floor was made of sand and some ashes from the blacksmith shop.

Various plans to secure more desirable quarters for the school were not very successful. At one time the City of Manila appropriated thirty thousand dollars for the use of a trade school, and building plans were drawn by the Bureau of Architecture. But the civil government did not do its share by making an appropriation to supplement that of the city, because the acting secretary of public instruction did not think the type of building was good enough. At a later date another set of plans rectifying the first mistakes were presented, but this was likewise rejected. As the commissioner expressed himself, he was highly in favor of industrial education, but he considered that a thorough pacification of the islands was first to be obtained, then an honest and impartial judiciary, and, third, the building of good roads and the promotion of other cheap and efficient means of communication and transportation. Then, after agricultural and industrial pursuits had been encouraged and fostered, the trade schools would easily and naturally follow. All of this seems clear and logical, but rather after the style of the statement that the Filipinos are to secure their independence as soon as they are qualified for self-government. It sounds all right to anyone not particularly interested, but it is rather depressing and unsatisfactory to those who do not care to wait for their children to grow up to do work which they desire to do and feel capable of doing themselves.

The following suggestions might prove of assistance in the solving of the educational problem in the Philippines:

Agricultural schools would probably benefit every part of the country, as some of the staple articles of food, as rice, for example, are not raised in sufficient quantities for home consumption. Climate and soil conditions are such that large crops of the cereal mentioned could easily be raised for local needs and probably for export as well. As each town usually has some special industry, the introduction of technical instruction in that line of work would naturally suggest itself. Investigations into all matters pertaining to the work and conditions governing it would follow. But there are many undeveloped natural resources which could develop by additional instruction in other trades.

The Philippine Islands are noted for the production of abacá, or Manila hemp; yet the manufacture of rope from this fibre is carried on in the crudest possible manner. Other excellent vegetable fibres might be grown with extremely profitable results. In fact, these islands are the center of the countries producing the long vegetable fibres of commerce. It would appear that there are unlimited possibilities in the manufacture of these fibres into twines, ropes and cloth. In other cases hat weaving or possibly pottery work is the chief occupation and perhaps the only one of a large village. It may be carried on, not in factories, but in the homes where each member of the family has a part to perform. In these villages small and inexpensive equipments would suffice, thus leaving the larger and more expensive machinery to be located in central places like Manila and Iloilo, where it would be more especially adaptable and at the same time available for the greatest number.

Few nations surpass the Chinese and Japanese in manual expertness, as it appears in the skilful working of various kinds of material. Personal observation in the homes of both of these peoples has convinced the writer that this ability to fashion industrial products artistically and well is due to very early and practically continuous training. If white races can be trained in the same way and the training be so modified that a judicious mental training be provided while the care-free happiness of childhood is not disturbed, then there will not be so many people who think themselves "sentenced to hard labor for life." With the promises of skill, and the power that comes with it, manual workers will see their work in a different light and they will demand trade training for their children as their rightful heritage.